

CALIFORNIA ASSOCIATION FOR NURSE PRACTITIONERS celebrates

**National Nurse Practitioner Week**

November 10 - 16

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**CANP**

## WHAT IS A NURSE PRACTITIONER?

If you see someone wearing a blue ribbon November 10-16, chances are they are supporting National Nurse Practitioner Week. A nurse practitioner (NP) is an advanced practice registered nurse who has completed graduate-level education such as a master's or a doctoral degree. All NPs are registered nurses who have completed additional education, training and have an expanded scope of practice over the traditional registered nurse role. To become licensed to practice, NPs hold national board certification in an area of specialty (such as family, women's health, pediatrics, adult, acute care, etc.).

Some facts about NPs:

- NPs are dedicated to bridging the gaps in healthcare to meet the needs of patients in California. NPs, working in collaboration with physicians, diagnose and manage acute and chronic conditions, prescribe medications, educate and counsel patients on healthcare issues and provide hands-on care to patients.
- There are over 16,000 NPs in California. Nationally, there are about 140,000 practicing NPs. Nearly 9,000 new NPs are trained each year at over 325 colleges and universities.
- NPs work under standardized procedures which are developed in collaboration with the physicians, nurses and facilities they work with. These standardized procedures are tailored to meet the needs of the unique setting and patient population in order to allow the NP to maximize his or her education and training.
- NP training programs were first developed over 40 years ago. A shortage of doctors forced state governments to innovate to meet the growing demand for health care services. The NP profession has grown to fill an important and vital role in America's health care system.
- NPs play a critical role in meeting California's health care needs. Working hand-in-hand with other licensed medical professionals, NPs improve the responsiveness and efficiency of our health care system. Because of their focus on primary care, disease prevention, and counseling, NPs serve as health care first responders for many families.
- NPs provide health care to people of all ages and in diverse health care settings, such as private office practices, hospitals, long-term care facilities, schools, state and local health departments, and community clinics.
- NPs also improve the health care system's ability to reach underserved populations. Primary health care is desperately needed in many urban and central city communities. NPs serve in these areas where there is a high demand for health care and a shortage of available physicians.

NPs specialize in many areas, including:

Acute Care	Adult Health	Family Health
Gerontology Health	Neonatal Health	Oncology
Pediatric/Child Health	Psychiatric/Mental Health	Women's Health

**Scope of practice:**

- Diagnosing, treating, evaluating and managing acute and chronic illness and disease (e.g. diabetes, high blood pressure)
- Obtaining medical histories and conducting physical examinations
- Ordering, performing, and interpreting diagnostic studies (e.g., routine lab tests, bone x-rays, EKGs)
- Prescribing physical therapy and other rehabilitation treatments
- Furnishing drugs for acute and chronic illness
- Providing prenatal care and family planning services
- Providing well-child care, including screening and immunizations
- Providing primary and specialty care services, health maintenance care for adults, including annual physicals
- Providing care for patients in acute and critical care settings
- Performing or assisting in minor surgeries and procedures, e.g. dermatological biopsies, suturing, casting)
- Counseling and educating patients on health behaviors, self-care skills, and treatment options

**Where you may find a NP:**

- Community clinics, health centers, urgent care centers
- Health departments
- Home health care agencies
- Hospitals and hospital clinics
- Hospice care
- Nursing homes
- Nursing schools
- Private and public schools, universities and colleges
- Physician/private medical practices
- Public health departments
- School/college clinics
- Veterans Administration facilities
- Walk-in clinics

For more information about nurse practitioners, please visit [canpweb.org](http://canpweb.org) or call us at (916) 441-1361.